

Delta Scene

Winter 1976 • One Dollar

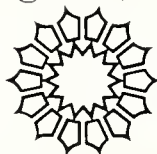




In North Mississippi,
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Cover: Photographer, Bob Lord, captures the stark beauty of a Delta dawn.

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FORUM

by Curt Lamar

"Peace on earth, good will toward men." To many people, regardless of their religious or denominational convictions, these lovely words are the essence of the spirit of the Christmas season. Yet these words seem a bit hollow and ironic in the face of the fratricide and carnage occurring in Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Southeast Asia, southern Africa, and other parts of the globe. Are men really so inhumane and savage? Is there, in fact, hope for the survival of mankind?

The answer to these questions is really rather simple. Man's survival is up to man himself. Although some men can be savage and cruel, the majority of the human kind are compassionate and good. The eventual destruction or prosperity of mankind depends totally upon whether the savage minority or the compassionate majority prevails.

In this holiday season, most of us take time to think about our reason for existence and to

consider our relationships with our fellow men. Many of us realize, with a twinge of guilt, that we fall into the category described by William Wordsworth when he wrote "Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: Little we see in Nature that is ours . . ." At the same time, most of us also realize there is indeed hope for us all, for in spite of all that is ugly and bad, there is more that is good and encouraging.

It is my fervent hope that more of us will strive to create a better world. In this respect, the hauntingly beautiful words of Etienne de Grellet should be pondered:

I shall pass through this life but once.

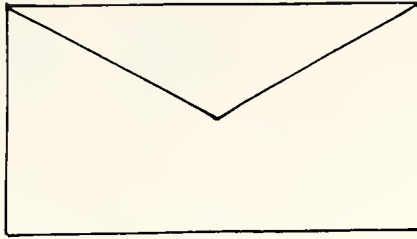
Any good, therefore, that I can do

Or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature,

Let me do it now.

Let me not defer or neglect it,
For I shall not pass this way again.

If we could do this, then there would certainly be "peace on earth, good will toward men." Merry Christmas and happy holidays! ▼



to the Editor:

I want to commend you and all who are responsible for producing **Delta Scene**. The publication provides a wonderful opportunity for us to become better acquainted with the uniqueness of the Delta. I find **Delta Scene** informative, interesting, and attractive. It represents a valued contribution in broadening our understanding of the rich heritage of Mississippi.

Byrle Kynerd
Birmingham, Ala.




Your piece on the Lady Statesmen was great. Bob's photo of "ducks" should get you some mail: those are Chinese geese. Before chemicals, we used them by the hundreds to chop cotton. Charles Conner's piece on German hospitality reminds me to remind him, whenever we meet, the Germans are amply represented in the Delta. Our late mayor, George Schierbaum, was full German. His mother ran a hotel/cafe until her death and her German dishes were a specialty.

Dr. Lamar's Forum piece is always good. I guess he knows, even in our small town of Shelby, we have some 11 or more national origin citizen-descendants. Some coming direct from the old countries. Our sons while in high

school here played football with nine "Americanized" boys of other national origins.

The cuisine here still has the native recipes. What the Lebanese do with egg plant, the Chinese with bean sprouts, the Italians with spaghetti and meatballs; the Germans with ducklings or roast goose; the French with souffles; the Cajun with seafood and okra; the Jews with sour dough hot rolls; the Dutch with pickled eggs; the English with muffins; the Irish with stew; the Austrians with barbecue ribs would make another cookbook — pure Delta is pure MIXTURE!!!!!! We even have one dish from Africa, known locally as peanut stew, and the people from India do delightful things with

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The Fair
Greenville, Miss.

- The Fair Downtown
- The Connection Greenville Mall
- The Fair Greenville Mall
- UniFashions Greenville Mall

This holiday season give "a gift for all reasons" from The Fair.

A Delta Restaurant Better than its Advertising.

Unfortunately, most Delta restaurants aren't as good as their advertising.

The Delta Warehouse is different. It's better.

We have worked hard for the past eighteen months to be able to reach the point that our customer comments allows us to say this. We are very glad. We like to please.

The Delta Warehouse is unique. Its setting in the Delta/Sunflower Square allows you to browse among the many

shops in a New Orleans atmosphere. The restaurant itself offers a variety of entrees at lunch and dinner.

Customers and critics alike are hard to please - those who have visited us have had good things to say and come back often. Try us for lunch or dinner. The prices are reasonable. The food and atmosphere are quite elegant. You won't leave feeling hungry. And you'll give us the best advertising in the world. Word of mouth advertising.



Delta/Sunflower Square
232 Sunflower
Clarksdale, Mississippi

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garden fresh vegetables. Nobody beats the Mexicans here with their Four Alarm Chili. (You call the fire dept. with 4 alarms).

Anyway, as a dear friend of mine in the rural would say about your Fall issue, you done good, Hon.

Ellen Orr
Shelby, Miss.

Thanks for **Delta Scene**. I now know what Mississippi Chemical is all about (although I had learned some from Jo G. Prichard); that the Lady Statesmen starting five will all be back this season; about a great looking place to have lunch or dinner the next time I'm traveling through Indianola. All this and I still have some magazine yet to read. I compliment you and all the others for an outstanding editorial and graphic job on this publication.

Enclosed is payment for our subscription.

Barney McKee
University Press of Mississippi
Jackson, Miss.

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STUDENT EVENTS

- Dec. Ongoing** Christmas Bazaar — Wright Art Center, Delta State University
- Dec. Ongoing** Paintings by Anna Meltzer — Carnegie Public Library, Clarksdale
- Dec. 12** "Feiffer's People" — MS Theatre Association competition entry — 2 p.m. — Whittington Playhouse, Greenwood
- Dec. 20** Christmas Puppet Show — performed by the Carnegie Public Library at the Clarksdale Hospital
- Jan. Ongoing** Paintings by Rita Saloway — Carnegie Public Library, Clarksdale
- Jan 3** Community Concert — Nancy Tatum of the Metropolitan Opera — 8 p.m. — City Auditorium, Clarksdale
- Jan 16-31** Fred Brownstein, sculptor, and Stella Brownstein, painter — Wright Art Center, Delta State University
- Jan. 18** Piano Recital, James Whittman — 8 p.m. — Zeigel Auditorium, Delta State University
- Jan. 27** Delta State University Concert Band Performance — 8 p.m. — Broom Auditorium, Delta State University
- Feb. 3** Organ Recital, Lawrence Robinson — 8 p.m. — Broom Auditorium, Delta State University
- Feb. 6-28** Faculty Art Show — Wright Art Center, Delta State University
- Feb. 12** Bayanihan Philippine dancers, Community Concert Series — 8 p.m. — City Auditorium, Clarksdale
- Feb. 14** Bayanihan Philippine dancers, Community Concert Series — 8 p.m. — Greenwood High School Auditorium
- Feb. 14** "Carmina Burana" - modern choral work by Carl Orff — Greenville Symphony Orchestra and Delta State University Chorus — 8 p.m. — Greenville High School Auditorium
- Feb. 14-18** Mississippi Art Association Travel/Lecture Program with George Snyder — Grenada
- Feb. 22** Joint Recital, Gail Robinson and William Walker of the Metropolitan Opera — 8 p.m. — Broom Auditorium, Delta State University
- Feb. 28** Community Concert Series — Whitmore and Lowe, dual pianists — 8 p.m. — City Auditorium, Clarksdale
- Mar. 1** Brass Choir Concert — 8 p.m. — Broom Auditorium, Delta State University
- Mar. 1, 2, 3** "God's Favorite" — Clarksdale Little Theatre — 8 p.m. — Little Theatre building, Clarksdale
- Mar. 6** Faculty Recital by Lyndell Watkins, pianist — 4 p.m. — Zeigel Auditorium, Delta State University
- Mar. 21-25** Mississippi Art Association Travel/Lecture Program with George Snyder — Greenwood
- Mar. 24** Riverboat Ragtime Review — a review of songs, ragtime piano and banjo, and humor from 1890 to 1910, with host 'Mark Twain' — 8 p.m. — Broom Auditorium, Delta State University
- Mar. 24-27** Greenwood Arts Festival — visual and performing arts, exhibits, concerts, theatre etc.
- Mar. 24** Connecticut Ballet Company — 8 p.m. — Greenwood High School Auditorium
- Mar. 26** Literary Seminar with Cleanth Brooks — 10 a.m. — Whittington Playhouse, Greenwood
- Mar. 31** Faculty Recital by Rebecca Zaiack, soprano — Zeigel Auditorium, Delta State University

Why Us? How The Movies Got From There To Here.



by Mary Jayne Whittington

Jackie Coogan's cap was askew. Charles Farrell's true love, Janet Gaynor, died on camera . . . and America sobbed quietly to the strains of "Smile for Me, My Diane." Later, the Marx brothers romped tirelessly across the screen, and from sea to shining sea ladies in darkened theaters sat and looked at John Barrymore's profile, listened to the golden voice of Ronald Coleman, and sighed. But that was long ago.

Hard times came to Hollywood, and the "good old days" were suddenly "gone with the wind." Consequently, the major film companies fled the studios for the wide open spaces of these United States.

The Deep South, no longer "lounging on the levees" and "waiting for the Robert E. Lee," as detractors would suggest, was quick to see the potential merits of an industry that involved neither coping with pollution nor expanding schools and other facilities for a larger, permanent population. As a result, the southern states took a long, appraising look at the motion picture industry and set their caps. Especially Mississippi.

There had been earlier and sporadic use of Mississippi for location filming by the motion picture industry. In the twenties, for example, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Heart of Maryland" were shot in Adams County. In the fifties, Tennessee Williams' "Baby Doll" was filmed on location in Bolivar County. But it was not until after Faulkner's "The Reivers" was filmed in Leflore and Carroll Counties that the Mississippi Film Commission came into being in 1973. This event occurred during the administration of Governor William Waller, and the state became aggressively involved in movie making.

"There was a natural affinity here," according to Christian Garrison, the Commission's charismatic Executive Director. "There is here a legacy of story telling. First oral, then written. The transition from fiction to films was predictable and easy." Garrison, a graduate of the University of

Mississippi by way of Millsaps, was appointed by Governor Cliff Finch to the A & I post in July of this year.

"There are several factors in the state's success in attracting pictures," said the native of Panola County. "One is the material being used now. The glossy sets for stories about penthouses and travel on ocean liners just aren't compatible with a public that queues up for 'Ode to Billie Joe' and 'Walking Tall.'"

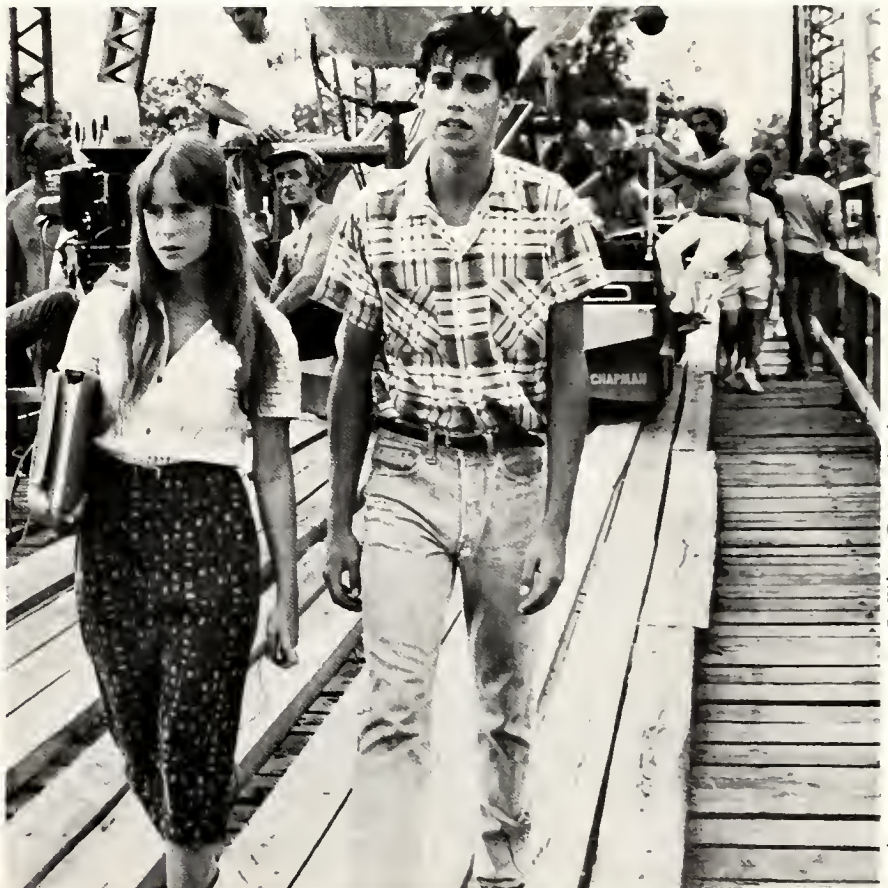
According to Ace Unit publicist Ted Ashton, less than half the pictures being made now are filmed in studios. "Television is responsible for the big move to location filming," Ashton indicated. "The ability to get out of the studios and move around in authentic settings was the advantage movies had over TV. Now the television cameras are moving out, too. Actors feel they can get more realism into a part played, say, in a real farmhouse than on a back-lot set."

Ashton noted that the move is economic as well. Many big studios have sold their back lots, which were on expensive property and were expensive to operate. Ashton used to pop in and out of Los Angeles to locations. "Now I'm gone for long stretches," said the Los Angeles native, who made lasting friendships while in Greenwood with the company filming "The Reivers."

The Faulkner classic was the Greenwood/Carrollton area's first adventure in the field of films. The movie was directed by Mark Rydell and starred Steve McQueen, and the company and local residents worked together congenially during the long sunny fall of 1968.

On the set one brilliant October day, I asked Rupert Crosse how he could be so certain the movie would be better than the master story-teller's novel. Motioning across an early autumn field, where a dirt road wound to and over a nearby hill, the actor, who

Glynnis O'Conner and Robby Benson, the young lovers in "Ode to Billy Joe," at work with the camera crew on the famed Tallahatchie Bridge.



photos courtesy MS Film Commission



A make-up touch-up temporarily halts the 1974 Mississippi filming of "Thieves Like Us," a Robert Altman film about a fictional Delta Bank robbery.



Steve McQueen, chief rogue in "The Reivers," takes a break during the Carrollton filming of the movie based on William Faulkner's last novel.

later was nominated for an Academy Award for his role in the picture, answered, "Nobody can say that in a book."

Although that's not the sort of thing to say around Rowan Oak, it made the point that the area is photogenic. Robert Altman, who directed "Thieves Like Us" in 1973 in the Jackson/Canton area, was quoted as saying the state has "an almost unbelievable variety of locations." Indeed, without mountains, oceans, or other cliché lens attractions, "Ode to Billie Joe" is undeniably a beautiful film. Shot in the fall of 1975 in Leflore County, it received the "Highest Human Value Award" at the 1976 Venice Film Festival.

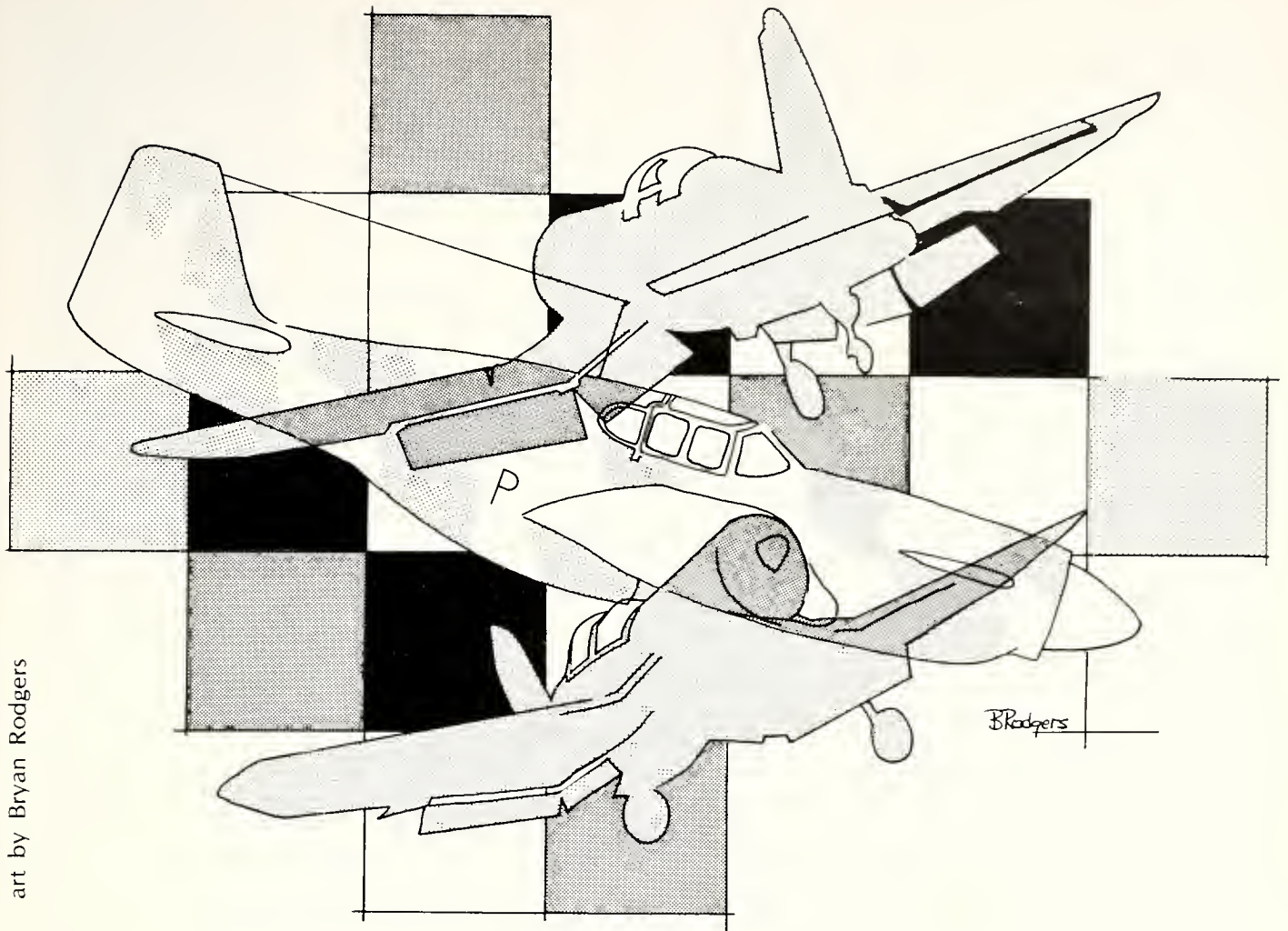
In recent months, the Bobbie Gentry ballad-made-into-a-movie has been followed by two television films. Thus, Greenwood and the surrounding region has become that area most exposed to film during the current boom in Mississippi.

According to the Film Commission's Board Chairman, Hal Phillips, a novelist and former script writer, Greenwood's advantage of access to both hill and Delta scenery has given it a lead in the current competition for pictures. Also in its favor are a complement of good motels for housing picture companies and a very active Greenwood Little Theater, whose players are off and running at the drop of a casting-call notice.

Simpson Hemphill, a veteran of the community theater's boards, has played a major part in attracting film companies to the Leflore County area recently, for the genial and talented director of Greenwood's "Cottonlandia Museum" has a belief in the past and the present of the Delta that is contagious and almost tangible. While working closely with "The Reivers" company as adviser on sets and properties, he recognized the compatibility of Deltans and the movie personnel.

Since then, in his efforts to bring films to his home community, Hemphill has collaborated with Greenwood Chamber of Com-

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art by Bryan Rodgers

THE MAGNIFICENT JONESES AND THEIR FLYING MACHINES

by Muffin Chiz

"It's a part of history that needs to be kept alive."

These words come from a woman who has been involved with airplanes and flying all her life. Thirty-one-year-old Anne Jones of Minter City once wanted to run her own crop-dusting business. Accidents which demolished two of her father's planes delayed those plans for some time, but Anne's fate literally seemed to be written in the stars.

Robby Jones, her husband, is one of that rare breed of men who makes his living dusting Delta

farmlands with insecticides and fertilizers from about ten feet above the fields, in a Grumman Ag-Cat, flying at an average of 90 m.p.h. Anne takes care of business at ground level.

Together they restore and rebuild World War II aircraft as a hobby, one that consumes time and money but whose benefits make it worthwhile for the Joneses.

The distinctive, gull-winged Corsair will go down in history as one of the most outstanding fighter aircraft ever designed. Of the seven in this country, now restored to flying condition, two

were brought to that point by Anne and Robby Jones. Admitting to the exceptional appeal of its rarity, plus the fact that so much of her own effort had been involved in its rebuilding, Anne was understandably reluctant when her husband decided to trade the Corsair for the less unique P-51 Mustang, a plane they now own and keep hangared in Grenada. In fact, good-natured banter flies between the couple as they debate the qualities of the two warbirds.

"The Mustang is sleeker, more streamlined, faster—and it looks
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A Delta's Version Of "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen"

by Louise B. Mayhall

It all began on a hot July day when my English son-in-law, born in London but now a United States citizen and Delta farmer, suggested that the time had come to spend Christmas in England. His children, and my grandchildren, were now eight and ten, and they would reap great benefits from such an experience. And so our plans were made. In retrospect, we were indeed merry, although there would not be much rest on our long-anticipated trip to spend Christmas in England.

Departing New York's Kennedy Airport on December 21 aboard a BOAC jetliner, we could scarcely believe we were on our way. Every seat on the plane was taken. We heard many foreign languages spoken and saw a number of passengers in native dress; however, everyone had a single desire: to be home for Christmas! Some eight hours later we landed at

London's Heathrow Airport. Our venture had begun.

Because we had made no preparations for the traditional holidays at home, not even taking gifts for Santa's pack since it would hold British-made toys to be bought in English shops, it was not until we were met at the airport by loving friends and relatives and found ourselves in downtown London traveling to our hotel that it dawned on us. There were only three more shopping days until Christmas!

Seldom has anyone seen more beautiful Christmas decorations than those we observed in the heart of London. Tall specimen evergreen trees had been sliced vertically and "applied" to the fronts of stores and public buildings, often to a height of several stories. Do not ask how they did it. Needless to say, the brilliantly lighted trees created a dramatic effect. Equally effective were the street decorations above

the traffic level, for here, flanked by tall candelabra, were large figures holding lighted candles and representing the Twelve Days of Christmas.

Soon we arrived at our hotel, the Waldorf, a very English establishment indeed. Built in 1908 and situated in the heart of London, its interior area encouraged relaxation in gracious and unusual surroundings. Noted for its quiet elegance, impeccable service, and friendly personnel, the hotel was permeated with a sense of the past. With walls a foot thick, it was one of the few buildings successfully to withstand the German bombings during World War II, and the famous Templar Grill, in the center of the hotel, was used extensively as a bomb shelter.

The sense of Christmas prevailed throughout the Waldorf. Towering trees, made gay with ornaments, stood in strategic places, not only in the Templar



photo by Phillip Workman

Grill but also in the main dining room and nearby sunken lounge. Utilized as unusual ornaments, in addition to the American decorations, were many pastel-colored, slender balloons. We were told they are a special, more durable type of balloon and always appear on English Christmas trees. Upon going downstairs the next morning, we watched a gracious lady busily arranging gold, red, and white mammoth chrysanthemums in Chinese bowls, to be placed throughout the various lounges and the foyer. Upon going back upstairs to our rooms, we found small bouquets, a nice gesture of welcome.

Warned by our daughter and son-in-law, who both remembered wartime England's cold, to take warm clothing, we were pleased and surprised to find that central heating facilities had been installed in the hotel. This development was probably one of the results of the impact of American servicemen and personnel stationed in wartime England. Another example of this impact was the flashing street sign that read "Drink Coca-Cola," leading my son-in-law to remark "I wonder whatever became of the sign 'Drink Bovril' that used to be everywhere?" Bovril was a beef tea guaranteed to pep one up and to be good for whatever ailed one.

Being Americans, the children naturally expected to hang up their stockings on Christmas Eve, and since there were mantelpieces in the spacious bedrooms, reminders of the days of open fires, they did so. However, we learned that this tradition is quite contrary to British custom. December 25 is a quiet family day, with church services in the morning, followed by family dinners and perhaps a concert in the afternoon. It is a happy time, but not a hilarious one as in the United States.

Rather, presents are given out on Boxing Day, December 26, a legal holiday as important as Christmas. It dates back to feudal times when the landed gentry gave out the "boxes" to their serfs on their estates. These boxes contained some cloth, some of the produce grown on the estates, and



Mysterious Stonehenge, still greating visitors after thousands of years.

some money. From this medieval custom of the annual settlement for services rendered grew the "furnish" on plantations, a custom that has continued on many Delta plantations almost to the present time.

When entire families began to arrive at our hotel on Christmas Eve, we asked the manager if there was a special reason for this influx. He replied that "everyone in the country comes to London for Christmas, and everyone in London goes to the country for the long holidays." He added that many of the same families returned to the Waldorf year after

year. Thus, for the gala dinner to be served in the Templar Grill, every seat was reserved far in advance.

When we asked if we should arrange with the florist for table flowers, anticipating some fourteen kinsmen, we were informed politely that the management took care of all such things. Indeed, when the time to eat arrived the table was lovely to behold. Small gilded pots containing topiary evergreen trees, delicately trimmed in miniature ornaments, lined the table center, with the traditional gold and white "crackers" piled in between. Known to

photo by Noel Workman

American children as "snappers," these are cardboard cylinders with fringed ends which, when snapped, bring forth paper caps and party favors, thus delighting children so. They are a must on English Christmas dinner tables.

As we went to dinner in the Gold Dining Room on Christmas Eve, we noticed a very large cake, about six inches high and three feet square, iced in white with the top depicting a winter scene containing skaters, trees, elves, and children playing. The next day, when we went into the Templar Grill for our Christmas dinner we spied a matching cake in the center of the dining room. Assuming that both cakes were part of the decor, we did not learn until dessert time that they were in fact made to eat. Our grandchildren were overjoyed, furthermore, when they were asked to cut and serve the cake to guests. These cakes were quite similar to our fruit cake.

The Christmas menu, gold-edged and trimmed in a holly border, featured a many-faceted meal. There was a separate fish course before the entree. Reflecting the American influence, Norfolk turkey was on the bill of fare. The traditional English bird is the goose. There was also the expected and delectable roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, as well as roast pork (if smoked, or ham, it is called "gammon."). With the advent of air express and frozen foods, many more vegetables are now available to the English, and the creamed spinach was the best we had ever tasted. We were intrigued to find that at each meal potatoes were served, prepared in several different ways, and that most guests take a small helping of each kind served.

Since England has a restricted growing season, salads are not very common. If a salad is served, its vegetables are more than likely grown in hothouses, except for an unusual type of cress. The aforementioned Christmas cake was just a sideline as far as dessert was concerned, for a "trolley" held the most sumptuous mousses, puddings, and assorted goodies, including the "Buche de Noel," a

cake that is rolled and iced in chocolate to resemble the yule log. This dessert is part of every family celebration and home ceremony in England. After dinner, coffee, either "white or black," fruits, nuts, and champagne were served. One was replete indeed.

At our table as guests was a charming couple from Andover, seventy miles from London, who were both accomplished pianists; therefore, a concert in the lounge followed dinner. Then, as night fell, a light tea was served to end a memorable day.

On Boxing Day, the 26th, we rented a car and were off bright and early to visit friends at Craigshead, Bull Lane, and Jarrod's Cross. What enchanting names these places have! Again we enjoyed a holiday feast, and boxes, or presents, were exchanged among us all.

Anyone having friends and/or relatives in a foreign country gains a true insight into their living pattern, an insight denied the average tourist. Thus, having rented the car we saw not only what everyone else sees — the changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, Westminster, and the various cathedrals and museums — but also we embarked on a three-day visit with friends in Andover. There we were shown a part of the English countryside as only a native could show us.

Each day after a hearty breakfast, we would begin our exploration, stopping at some ancient inn, right out of a story book, for lunch. It was nothing to dine in buildings several hundred years old and lovingly cared for so that they were in excellent condition. We traveled country lanes so narrow that two cars could not pass, saw smoke curling up from quaint houses with thatched roofs, and observed flowers poking their heads above rooflines, probably from a seed which a bird had dropped into the thatching. Thatching, we were told, is almost a lost art and very few such houses remain.

Since both were close by, mysterious Stonehenge and lovely Winchester Cathedral were

visited. We felt as if we were in another century in Andover itself. The little shops and narrow cobbled streets of the town have such old world charm. No one there ever heard of a supermarket. Fish is bought from the fishmonger; meat from the butcher; vegetables from the greengrocer; and bread and cakes from the bakeshop. All this gave us a sense of timelessness and filled us with dreams of days gone by. But reality made itself felt, for it was time to go back to London.

The children, anxious to ride a fast English train, returned to London that way, accompanied by their mother. My son-in-law and I drove back with the luggage, stopping enroute to visit his old R.A.F. base at Benson, Great Windsor Park, and to have lunch at the historic old Red Lion Inn on the Thames, from which the Henley Regatta begins each year. There swans swam majestically under our noses. The scene was one of enchantment.

Back in London, each day remaining passed quickly as we engaged in a variety of activities for grownups and children alike. There was the trip to the zoo, tea with a retired English officer at the United Service Club, and a play at the theatre. Then, there were services at the famous R.A.F. Church and at St. Clement Danes, which has the finest organ in London, a gift from the United States Air Force. After church services on New Year's day, we had lunch at the Royal Air Force Club, a handsome, austere, and historic building on Piccadilly Circus near Hyde Park. There was more sightseeing, more visits with relatives, and the making of more new friends, but all too soon it was time to think about home, for the children had already missed a week of school.

And so we were airborne again, arriving in the Delta to face unopened Christmas mail, tax forms, and the like. We brought few tangible gifts home with us; however, we did bring the most wonderful gift of all — happy memories of a lovely Christmas with friends and relatives in merry old England. ▼

The Enchantment Of Leland's Deer Creek

by Sharon Terry Love

Situated on the banks of Deer Creek, a natural creek which flows through the Delta of Mississippi, is Leland, where there prevails a tradition that is as true as Christmas itself. Lelanders have developed a style of decorating all their own, for each year at Christmas Deer Creek is transformed from a placid stream into an enchanted wonderland which fascinates young and old alike. Creative, lifelike floats depicting both the life of Christ and typical Christmas themes are suspended in midstream, while tall, artificial Christmas trees grace the stream banks, mounted just in the edge of the water. At night, when the lights are on, the little town of Leland glows as if it were Santa's workshop itself!

Word of the pageantry of Deer Creek has spread far and wide, bringing tourists from as far away as Florida and inspiring similar decorative ideas in such distant places as California. Indeed, bus loads of people from surrounding towns and states annually make the trip to Leland to view Deer Creek in all its Christmas glory.

To local children, Christmas in Leland is as real as at the North Pole, for Santa Claus always makes a special trip down Deer Creek officially to inaugurate the town's festivities. Spectators come from miles to witness Santa's arrival in a

motorized sleigh float, complete with reindeer. To the delight of the excited youngsters, the sleigh pulls in at the main bridge and Santa Claus himself flips the switch that officially turns on the famous lights. This year's holiday season begins Dec. 7 and Santa is all set to arrive at dark.

What has become a Christmas tradition in Leland was initiated some years ago by Mayor Louis Munn, whose original concept was to line the banks of the Creek with brightly colored Christmas trees. In time, more and more trees were added, and by 1959 it was decided to decorate fully the Creek all through town.

The first year of this undertaking, Dr. Simmons bought several papier-mache reindeer for use on a Santa Claus float, to be sponsored by the Lions Club of Leland. Mr. Munn contributed his back yard as well as his time, for he made most of the floats himself. There were four floats on the Creek that first year — the Santa Claus float, a Nativity scene, a wreath, and a float featuring Santa going down a chimney.

The half dozen trees that originally trimmed the banks were taken down and replaced by eighteen permanent ones, set in concrete bases in the bottom of the Creek. The water level was lowered in the Creek for the placement of the concrete slabs, which stabilized the trees. All the

trees were made entirely by hand by Mayor Munn, who carefully twisted each piece of pipe and heavy wire in place. Now the trees stand like silhouettes in the water at night, casting beautiful reflections that are bounced about and illuminated by tiny waves, then tossed back into the night even more beautiful than before.

Although attractive, the papier-mache reindeer were not durable and lasted only one season. Thus, Mayor Munn again utilized his ingenuity to make new reindeer, using two by four's, chicken wire, masking tape, and a fiberglass covering for the exterior. A total of eight reindeer currently pull Santa's sleigh. Their horns are the "real thing," and were provided by Gordon Hartley, outdoor sports editor of the *Greenville Delta Democrat Times*. During the second hectic year, a vigorous campaign was implemented throughout the state as Lelanders sought to procure such necessary items as styrofoam and mannequins to make their floats more realistic.

By the third year Leland was ready to support the Deer Creek project in a grand manner. A number of churches and civic organizations began to offer their assistance, and enthusiasm spread like wildfire among the townspeople.

Currently there are fifteen floats
continued on page 23





EF
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Rodgers

Straw Madonna

by Gertrude Doud

Nelda was cooking supper when the telephone rang.

"Would you answer that for me?" she asked Dave, who was underfoot and crying about something.

"Mmmph Mmmph Mmmph—"

"Please. Do it for mother."

"Naa naa—"

"Please, Dave. My hands are busy."

Dave kept sobbing and didn't move. It tore at Nelda's heart, a boy his size. Her problem was ever before her.

She tried once more, patiently. "You're plenty big enough now and I've told you what to say. Just pick up the receiver and say 'hell-o' — and listen — and say, 'do you want to speak with my mother?'"

The telephone stopped ringing

before she reached it. She felt that her life was a constant losing of fights. She returned to the pie crust and expected failure there, too. Most of her fights were with herself, of course, and Nelda supposed they were the bitterest kind. Dave couldn't help what he was — she winced even now when she thought about the word they used. *BORDERLINE*. Though the word contained hope, the hope slipped away from her every time she tried to put it into action.

The answering of a telephone was such a small matter. Yet, of all the stumblings, it came the closest to flooring Nelda. She had spent hours telling him how to do it, telling him what to say. It had begun to stand for everything. It could be at least a start. A telephone was communication. Many things Dave couldn't handle, but what got Nelda so, he

could say *hello* as distinctly as anybody.

He leaned against her as she worked. She patted his head. Whether she did it to comfort him or to beg forgiveness, she wasn't sure.

Through the window she could see the boys in the vacant lot chasing the cottonwood fuzz that drifted. Their shirtless bodies were dark gold in the fading of the day. Their movements became a dance, slow motion, then full and swift again. The beauty of their scampering and the whoops of their laughter struck Nelda deeply. A group of four, the boys were. Three were Dave's age, or thereabout. One was two years younger. Occasionally she sent Dave out to play with them, went with him and encouraged him. But it never worked out.

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Profile: Santa Claus

In a continuing effort to provide our readers with up-to-date information on the faces and places behind the news, Delta Scene presents the following in-depth interview with that famous personage of the Christmas season, Saint Nicholas, a.k.a. Santa Claus.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me, Mr. Claus, how would you describe your religious background?

ST. NICK: Now that's a good question, toots. You can't please everyone, I always say, but as the patron saint of Russia, sailors, thieves, children, and virgins, certainly I have broad-based religious support.

INTERVIEWER: I see. Well, could you fill us in a little on your childhood?

ST. NICK: Sensitive of you to notice that I was once a child. Some folks think I sprang up full-grown. It's amazing the misconceptions that surround your average Santa Claus.

INTERVIEWER: I can sympathize. But back to your youth. Did you have brothers and sisters?

ST. NICK: No, no, I was the only son born to parents known for their good deeds. And I might add that despite being an only child, I was certainly never spoiled. Indeed not! Times were rough back in Lydia, Asia Minor, early in the 4th century A.D. Young people today don't know how soft they've got it.

INTERVIEWER: But I understood that your parents were wealthy.

ST. NICK: Why, I was just a poor country boy. Worked hard all my life. And not to publicly brag over private charity, but it's commonly known that I gave all my inheritance to the needy.

INTERVIEWER: What about these reports of your involvement with three lovely young women?

ST. NICK: Now let me say this about that. It was a purely platonic situation. True, the girls couldn't type, but our involvement was strictly above board. Why I secretly threw gold into their house at night to provide the poor girls with dowries so they

could marry those nice young triplets from down the block.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I'm glad we got that straightened out. But what about the foreign grain deal?

ST. NICK: Yes. Well, that too has been distorted. After I ascended to the bishopric in Lydia there was this famine, you see. I acquired enough grain from ships bound for Alexandria to keep the region well fed for three years. In return I promised the sailors that when they arrived at their destination, they would find the original quantity on board.

INTERVIEWER: Amazing! And how did you accomplish this?

ST. NICK: It's all a matter of knowing the right people.

INTERVIEWER: I understand that you are fond of travel, Mr. Claus.

ST. NICK: Right on, kiddo. Since the Early Middle Ages I've been the patron saint, at one time or the other, for Greece, Russia, Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Naples, Sicily, and recently the United States.

INTERVIEWER: That's quite an itinerary. Don't you ever suffer from jet lag?

ST. NICK: Never. I keep my reindeer running right on schedule. And my ground crew maintains my sleigh at peak condition.

INTERVIEWER: I understand that you're quite a clothes horse, Mr. Claus.

ST. NICK: You like this little red fur-trimmed number I'm wearing today? The essence of simplicity. But in the old days, of course, I was a bit of a fashion plate. In American colonial times I dressed in a bishop's robe and mitre. That was in the days when I was accompanied everywhere by my servant, Black Pete. But nobody wants to be a servant nowadays. Then in Albany, N.Y. in 1848, they called me Sinti Klass. Back then, I wore a tricorn hat, silver buckled shoes, and smoked a long white pipe with orange ribbons. Course, what with the Surgeon General's warning on smoking, I've given up the pipe. I tell you, there's few pleasures left to a man nowadays. You take food for instance. Time was when a St. Nicholas cake was

considered lucky. Irish fishermen always carried at least one in their boats to insure their safety. But today it's strictly Metrecal and low-cal soda. I tell you I don't know what this world is coming to.

INTERVIEWER: What about the charges that you have lost touch with reality?

ST. NICK: Reality, schmeality! Folks don't know what's good for them. A little ho, ho, ho never hurt anyone, I say. Besides, now that they've got television, if they don't see it on the tube, they don't believe in it. Let me just tell you a thing or two. You see what you want to see and you hear what you want to hear. For example, you ever see faith? You ever see hope? Well, you get my drift. Just because you never see the future doesn't mean we're not going to have one. You want to know what's true reality? I'll tell you. It's the look on a little girl's face on Christmas morning when she comes downstairs and there under the tree is that one perfect doll, the one her folks said they probably couldn't afford this year, the only one out of all the dolls in the stores that reached out to her heart and promised hundreds of happy afternoons sharing a child's secrets. Reality is getting a real, sure-enough train set when you didn't dare even ask for one. Reality is putting out cookies and milk on Christmas Eve and, in the morning, there's not a single crumb left. The greatest gift is that willing suspension of belief. It doesn't come all wrapped up in tinsel and foil. It's the promised part, the dream that breathes and takes human form even if only for one day a year. I tell you plainly, if I'm not reality, then folks have forgotten the substance of the wind. ▼

Rebecca Hood-Adams is a graduate student in English at Delta State University, where she teaches a course in reporting. The former Director of Communications for the Tennessee Senate, she graduated from Memphis State University with a B.A. in journalism.

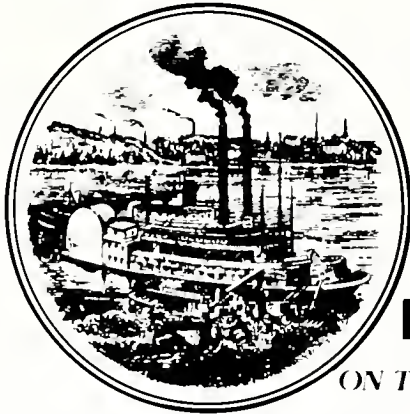
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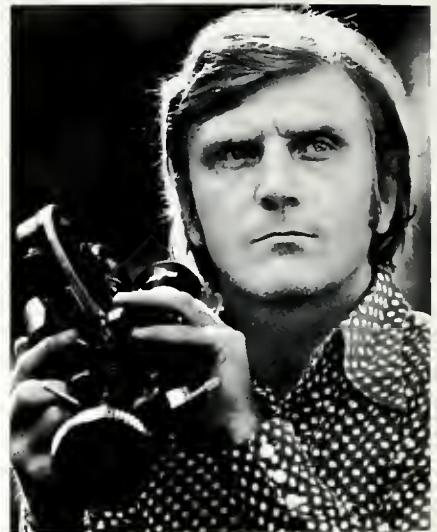
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Christian Garrison, Executive Director, MS Film Commission

merce Executive Secretary John Lovorn and the Film Commission's Charlie Allen, a native of nearby Itta Bena, whose eleven years in California resulted in many associations and friendships in motion picture circles.

Simpson, as he is known to almost everyone around, has had roles during the past year in "Ode to Billie Joe," "Minstrel Man," and "Walking Tall: Final Chapter," filmed recently in Jackson, Tennessee. He said, "For us here there's been sort of an aura of adventure in film making and the movie makers have been intrigued with the mystique of the Delta. It's been a give and take relationship all the way."

"Mystique? Aura? Tommyrot!" said Joyce Bowen, a local bank president's wife who played a bit part in "Ode to Billie Joe." "It's hard work and waiting long hours. That's what it is." After a pause she added with a smile, "... and I'd love to do it again."

Maybe she will have the opportunity. Upcoming there is "Bessie Smith," to be filmed in and around Clarksdale and Jackson with Gordon Parks directing and Aretha Franklin starring. Also, there is to be filmed "Mean Dog Blues" by Bing Crosby Productions. The story telling goes on.

As the French say, "Plus ça change, plus c'est même chose."

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gracing Deer Creek, each sponsored by a church or civic organization. Spots are rotated each year to add variety, and often the floats are changed to add more realism and color. It usually takes about a week to get the floats prepared for launching, and each organization is responsible for the initial expense of the float and for subsequent repairs. Customarily, the Thanksgiving Holidays are reserved for float repairs, leaving about a week to get the lights connected and working before the floats are displayed.

As was the case with most things, the recent energy crisis had its effect on the lights of Deer Creek. Due to the energy shortage, the lights that once burned all night are now turned off before midnight. Though they may not burn as long, the Leland Christmas lights seem to burn brighter than ever, representative of the civic pride most Lelanders possess. Indeed, in large part because of this project native Lelanders are understandably proud of their heritage and proud of their town.

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continued from page 11
so much better in the air," Robby points out.

"But the Corsair, with its strange flip-up wing, is much more unusual," Anne snaps back.

"Besides, we restored it piece by piece. The engine and hydraulics had to be completely rebuilt. I stayed up to my elbows in grease for a long time, living and breathing the Corsair," she added.

Anne has good reason to be emotional. Theirs was the first Corsair ever to be restored to flying condition in the United States.

"Once you get into a project like this, you are determined to make it work," she continued, and it was obvious she had really gotten into that one.

They had only a rough copy of the technical manual by which to go when they began their work, and parts were hard to locate, even harder to come by.

"There was a wrecked Corsair abandoned in a field near Memphis, and Robby got permis-

sion from whoever owned the property to get some parts off the plane. There was only one manual anywhere, and we had to borrow it and make copies for ourselves."

Anyone who has ever seen a Vought F4U Corsair will attest to its exceptional qualities. It seems to be an accepted fact of aircraft history that the design and workmanship of the Corsair was so outstanding that it set a standard for all allied aircraft manufactured during World War II. The inverted gull-wing design was adopted in order to fit the large radial powerplant of an engine, made by Pratt and Whitney, into the frame of a single-seat fighter plane.

As much as she hated to see the Corsair go, Anne Jones was enthusiastic about acquiring the faster Mustang. Time has helped, and she has become an ardent booster of their new craft, spending long hours painting it and keeping it in top condition.

Painting these planes seems to be one activity through which owners can really demonstrate their personal flair, and some aircraft are quite brilliantly decorated. Others are repainted in the military style, hopefully to make them more valuable because they look more like they originally did.

Anne Jones has never received her pilot's license, but she has participated in an air show as a wing-walker, strapped upright to the top of a biplane as its pilot took the plane and Anne through a series of climbs and dives and aerial antics that would make the average person's blood run cold.

"I'd never even done any wing walking before the show. I guess I was too scared to make any practice runs. The harness was made for a man, and really didn't fit me snugly enough, but the guide wires seemed to hold it all together."

Incredibly, Anne manages to talk about that experience with some fondness.

"I don't think I'd do it again, though. Not long after, a wing-walker was killed when the pilot misjudged his distance from the ground during an upside-down maneuver."

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The Joneses presently own two planes in addition to the Mustang. One is a Chipmunk, used for aerobatics, although originally a training plane for the Canadian Air Force.

The other is an AT-6 Texan, known as a "T-6," and used as a training plane by the U.S. Air Force. The T-6 has been flown by more military pilots, worldwide, than any other aircraft.

When asked if I wanted to fly in the T-6, I quickly but politely declined. Encouraged by Anne Jones, my own fears seemed to fade, although I don't even get on fast carnival rides. Obviously, the Joneses did not understand how I could write about these planes without having firsthand experience in one.

I shakily climbed up on the wing of the T-6, crawled into the cockpit behind Robby, and thought a lot about what life meant to me.

The flight seemed calm enough at first, although the feeling of oneness with the sky around is certainly poignant. The plastic canopy above and the constantly changing roar of the engine made me feel very much a part of the mechanical aspect of the plane, yet keeping me in touch with the serenity of the space around us.

Then the pilot decided to give me a few thrills. As he banked the plane steeply to the left, my whole body tensed, and I dared to look at the incredible panorama all around us. It's easy to understand how one can learn to love to fly in a small plane, so fantastic are the vistas.

We made two fast passes, the climbs back up as frightening as the dives were. As we had zoomed over Jones Flying Service, the ground crew had all smiled and waved, and the marvelous fact was that I'd been close enough to see them!

Just as I began to get comfortable with the situation and to reflect on the opportunity I was having to "get in touch," Robby spied some friends below us who were loading cotton from a picker into a trailer. We began a dive, and it never stopped until we were

ten feet above that dusty field. My knuckles were white as they gripped the bucket seat, my heart was somewhere between palpitating and stopping altogether, and my stomach was back where we began our descent. We were strafing a cotton trailer, and I was seeing my life pass before my eyes.

After a landing which seemed remarkably smooth to be on a dirt strip, and certainly smoother than any jet landing I'd ever experienced, I scrambled out of the T-6, my legs nearly collapsing as I jumped to the ground.

Anne was laughing, but I had to admit I really enjoyed it.

"Kids today don't know anything about the period in history that goes with these planes. They are part of our background that needs to be remembered. You want to try to make everyone understand why you're doing this, why you love it. And you have to love it to get into it enough to make it a hobby as well as a career." A remarkable woman, Anne Jones.

She and Robby try to get to as many air shows and meetings of the Confederate Air Force as possible. The CAF is made up of members dedicated to preserving U.S. combat aircraft of the World War II period. National headquarters is at Harlingen, Texas, although "wings" are located all over the country.

The CAF makes planes available for its participating wings, so that members who may not own their own planes can still enjoy working with and flying the old craft.

Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas members are known as the "Cajun Wing," but the Joneses hope to help Mississippians organize their own unit, here in the state, so that interested people won't have to go all the way to Louisiana to get together with other flying buffs.

It is "a part of history that needs to be kept alive," and it is people such as Anne and Robby Jones of Minter City who are vitally interested in preserving that era and immortalizing it for posterity.

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continued from page 19

This summer. And then school.

Nelda's husband, a highway engineer, was out of town a great deal. When Dave was smaller, it was Dah—ee who taught him to perform his personal habits. It was easier for his father to accept their problem than Nelda. He kept telling her that the special school would not be the end of hope, but the beginning. She wished she could believe it. If only he were here now, to help her out of the mood she was in.

The telephone rang again.

"Son, answer the phone for mother. Hurry before they hang up."

Dave whimpered.

"Please son."

Dave ran past the telephone and she knew where he was going.

She lifted the receiver.

The voice at the other end of the line said, "Nelda, I just wanted to remind you about Billy's piano recital tomorrow, and I so hope you can come."

"We're planning on it."

"His teacher thinks he has real

promise. He's already worked up several little Bach Preludes, and two or three other things."

"Oh, I know you must be proud of Billy."

When Nelda left the phone she went straight to the bed.

"Dave, come out from under that bed right now."

Silence.

"Please don't do your mother this way. How can you?"

More silence.

Nelda turned quickly and let out a scream. She caught a startled glimpse of herself in the dresser mirror as she rushed by. She brought herself to a normal pace by the time she hit the front door. As she reached the sidewalk, she brushed a feather of cottonwood fuzz off her nose. She was two blocks away before she wondered where she was going. She wasn't concerned with direction. She felt the bounce of her hair on the nape of her neck and heard her clogs clomping on the pavement.

The next thing Nelda knew, she was in the mall. It was crowded with late shoppers and a mixture

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of voices fell upon her. She passed the fountain and its roar. Little splashes touched her arm. The mannequins in the department store windows stared at her. A group of women walked passed her at a clip toward the cafeteria, and they sounded to Nelda like lighthearted birds.

Nelda wandered through the gift shop looking at candles. A smiling girl in an embroidered smock asked if she needed help.

"No, just looking."

As she walked up and down the aisles she wondered if she was too close to Dave — too protective. She had never left him alone before, not even for a minute.

Now she knew it was getting dark. She could feel Dave's fright, and she hated herself. Because of the anxiety in her heart, all her motherhood rushed at her. She was not exasperated with Dave, but with herself for screaming at him. She was sure she was not running way from him, but from herself.

She saw a telephone booth and continued on page 30

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Green Scene: The Amaryllis

by Muffin Chiz

If you are lucky enough to receive one of these flowering beauties for Christmas, you are going to need to know a few things to keep them looking their best after New Year's Day. Most of us are only knowledgeable enough to keep a poinsettia around a few months at most. Some can't cope with those traditional decorative plants more than a couple of weeks. And a growing number are thrilled that the poinsettia's popularity is being challenged by these newcomers.

First, a few words about the amaryllis. It is a bulb, and like all flowering bulbs, it can be forced into early bloom. And what a brilliant bloom it will be. The amaryllis' flowers can have a span as large as nine inches, surely one of the showiest plants around. Imagine if you can, a gorgeous Christmas-red blossom eight or nine inches across, at the top of a deep green, sturdy stalk.

Forcing bulbs has become very popular and is such a marvelous way to bring color indoors at Christmas time. It is possible to decorate holiday tables with natural red and green flowering

plants, and to use them to point up special areas of decorative interest in the casual way that has become so fashionable.

The amaryllis bulb should be potted in a rich, sandy soil mix with a teaspoon or two of bonemeal added as a fertilizing agent. This should be done early enough to allow four to six weeks for the flowers to bloom.

This is also a good time to let your creativity go a little festive, by using your imagination in selecting a container. About the only limitation is that you give the bulb about two inches all around between it and the pot. If you have a favorite Christmas decoration, and if it can be used, by all means use it.

Be sure you leave a third of the bulb exposed above the soil, a step absolutely necessary in forced growth. Water the soil well so that the roots will get off to a good start, and keep the dirt barely moist until the actual growth starts.

The green, strong stalk will poke its head through in a week. Children are fascinated by this entire process, and it is so rapid they will be thrilled daily with the progress. In a month the evidence



of future glory will be recognized, yet the blossom itself will be so brilliant and fragrant it never ceases to amaze its owners.

With proper care an amaryllis plant will have a flowering period of two to three months or longer. When the flowers begin to fade, don't hesitate to cut them off the stem. They've rewarded you enough, and now it's time to let the leaves do their thing. Continue to water the plant, and keep up the feeding schedule as long as the leaves look green and healthy.

This is the part the mail-order books leave out: as the leaves begin to yellow, you should begin to ignore your amaryllis instead of doing everything in your power to find out where the yellow went. At this point, if you are patient and don't mind seeing it dry out, you can save that bulb and repot it again next year. Stick it in a closet, sneak a peek if you must, and retrieve the bulb when all the foliage has dried. Store the bulb in a cool, dry, well-ventilated somewhere — and start the whole process over again next fall, with a year of good experience behind you, and the confidence to tell others how. ▼

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continued from page 27
went toward it. She wanted to tell Dave she was on her way home and not to be afraid. Then she remembered — no purse. She walked back into the gift shop and the candles. The girl in the embroidered smock appeared. Nelda felt her desperation showing, but she faced the girl and begged a dime to make the call.

When she put the dime in the slot, her heart pounded. She realized she might be up against a blank wall. She dialed the number, making a crisp and definite stroke for each digit, as if that would help. She heard the ring at the other end, the ring again, and the ring again. *I'm willing to wait*, she thought. She wasn't trying to prove any point, she only wanted a grain of hope. Oh, it wasn't even a grain of hope she wanted. She wanted to hear Dave's voice.

The click.

"—Hell-o?"

Nelda could hardly take it in, the burst of joy was so strong in her.

"Dave, listen now. Can you hear

me? Mother is on her way home — and mother loves you."

Nelda didn't even fight her tears.

"Mother loves you, Dave — and she is so proud of you." She wanted to hold on to the moment, not let it be gone quickly. She was tempted to tell him the secret she had hardly told herself yet. She was going to school, too, for a few days when school started, to a class for mothers — they called it a class for "special" mothers. Until this instant she had hidden from the thought of that step. But no, she could save the talking until she got him. She needed to hurry.

The pie came to her in a flash. She wondered if she could explain to him how to turn off the oven. *Forget it*, she thought. A burnt pie was better than a burnt Dave. She didn't care if all the pies in the world burned.

"I answered the phone," said Dave.

She understood every word.

"Yes, Son, you did, and we'll talk talk talk when I get there. I'm on my way now. Wait for mother."



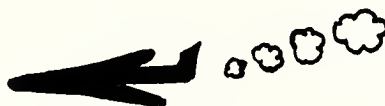
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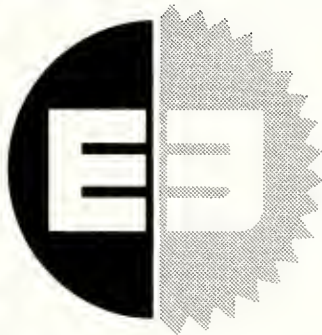
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